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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING CONFERENCE OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS INTERESTED IN RURAL SOCIAL WORK

The Conference of National Associations interested in Rural Social Work was held at the New Willard Hotel, Washington, D. C., March 29, 1921. Members from about twenty-five associations were present, including both public and private organizations. The minutes of the previous meeting told of the organization of the Council of National Agencies interested in Rural Social Work, also that of the Councils of Rural Agencies in the various states. An account of the formation of the Council was given by the secretary and its scope and purpose were made subjects of general discussion.

The National Council of Agencies Engaged in Rural Social Work is an integral part of the Country Life Association, with this difference,—that the Country Life Association is a membership body, whereas the Council is a representative body; they form two different groups with somewhat different interests. The Council is designed as a working body along the line of agreements and division of the field. The Country Life Association with its membership basis was found to be too unwieldy an instrument for this purpose. It had been felt that it was time to pull together the agencies interested in the human side of Country Life and to define the field of each. For this purpose, the Council was created. The purpose of the Council was further defined as follows: "That it was formed with the intention of coming to a better understanding of our own and each others' problems rather than to create a new instrument of power to influence levels of public opinion. It was thought safer to start in this way, although it might later develop into a means for influencing public opinion.

The desirability of group conferences to study certain subjects was discussed, approved, and carried out that afternoon in a group conference on recreation.

The preparation of a bulletin was discussed which should contain (1) a statement of the aims and objectives in country life as defined by the American Country Life Association; (2) programmes of rural social work of the different national agencies engaged; (3) a list of personnel of the organizations engaged in rural social work. There was a good deal of objection to the inclusion in the bulletin of a list of personnel, even of state representatives of the different associations, as it was thought to be too subject to change. However, there would be a statement in regard to each agency as to

whether or not they had state organizations and representatives. It was hoped that each organization would be responsible for at least one hundred copies of the bulletin. It was thought to be advisable that the Council should work in coördination with the Atlantic City conference.

The afternoon discussion was carried on under three separate heads—(1) General Policies, (2) Procedures and Methods, and (3) Group Conference on Recreation. The question arose as to whether the Council should have a definite policy in regard to legislation. The Country Life Association had not found it wise to take part in promoting legislation. With the Council the situation would be different, as the members would act as official representatives of their organizations. The suggestion was made that the president or secretary draw up questions on legislation to be discussed at the next meeting, that consideration of the legislation be a matter of discussion only, and that no vote should be taken which would be binding on the Council, and that no organization would be committed by the action of its representatives. The official agencies, particularly the States Relation Service of the Department of Agriculture, were fearful of taking any stand on matters of legislation. It was contrary also to Red Cross policy to engage in legislative activity.

It was suggested that meetings be held only when there is a definite programme of fundamental questions and a possibility of getting people together, that there should be no fixed time for meetings and that lists of questions should be sent around beforehand, so that everyone would know what matters were to be discussed and would come prepared for such discussion.

Another question which was discussed was whether there is any possibility of coördinating different kinds of county social work and especially of combining the budgets for this work, so that it could be determined how much work a county could afford to undertake. No definite conclusion was reached. An attempt was made to define the functions of the Farm Bureau, the Grange and the University Extension Service. It was stated that in the main, the Farm Bureau is occupied with the economic situation, the Grange with community organization, and the Extension Service with education and welfare. Doctor True of the States Relations Service of the Department of Agriculture felt that no such hard and fast distinction could be drawn as, in his opinion, these functions depended largely on the local situation; for in some places where the Grange is not active, the Farm Bureau is very much occupied with social welfare, and also the county agents of the Extension Service are closely connected with the Farm Bureau. He defined the Farm Bureau as the voluntary

organization of farm people and the Extension Service as the public organization coöperating with the Farm Bureau.

In taking up the subject of recreation as carried on by the different agencies represented in the Council, it was thought best for purposes of discussion to divide them into three groups: (1) Those engaged in promoting recreation; (2) those concerned in investigating recreation; (3) those using it informally, but not as a part of their programme.

Different agencies reported on what they are doing in the field of recreation, the age groups with which they were concerned and the type of work. Discussion centered about certain principles such as: (1) whether or not it is ethical to use recreation as a stepping stone to another programme, and (2) how a coöperative community recreation programme could be developed so that different agencies might contribute what they were particularly qualified to give. In regard to (1) it was not thought justifiable to launch a recreation programme as a means to something else if it meant dropping recreation from the programme as soon as the main objective is reached, leaving the need which was formerly supplied, unprovided for. Arrangements should be made for its continuance whether by the same or another agency. In regard to the development of a coöperative community recreation programme, it should not be supported by any one agency, but should be a community undertaking and responsibility.

As there was no finality about the foregoing discussions which were rather a seeking for a common ground of agreement and action, the secretary was charged with the preparation of a statement of principles which should crystalize the discussion. He was also given the preparation of a chart which should be submitted for verification in the near future to the organizations represented in the Council showing how the field of recreation is being covered.

ITEMS

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 22nd. For the accommodation of those attending the Milwaukee Convention, arrangements have been completed with the Chicago and Northwestern Railway for special parlor cars and coaches from Chicago to Milwaukee on the train leaving Chicago 8:00 a. m. Tuesday, June 21st.

AN AMENDMENT TO THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES' BILL has just passed the legislature which makes it necessary for all public health nurses to be registered in the state. If not already registered in Minnesota, they must apply for registration immediately upon their employment, and unless registered within six months from date of application, their further employment shall be illegal. The bill also provides for necessary expenses to cover and include the

usual amount for office and transportation, plus meals and lodging of nurses when on duty away from their places of residence.

TOLEDO, OHIO.—The value of a publicity committee in the work of a visiting nurse association has been well demonstrated in the recent annual report issued by the Toledo Visiting Nurse Association. The Committee has been responsible for the following duties: Edited annual report; issued three bulletins; gave monthly news notes to daily press; issued invitations to churches, hospitals and nurses to attend special health meetings of the association; arranged for showing moving pictures dealing with health; sent announcements of maternity service to doctors of the city; sent articles to nine magazines; provided factories with health material for the shop bulletins; addressed and stamped all envelopes for annual report and bulletins; distributed 2,000 leaflets at Food and Style show; prepared list of all Parent-Teachers' Club Meetings and provided speakers for mothers; all photographs of the association were collected into scrapbooks; block cuts of the pictures were filed in a cabinet.

The reports of the different departments of the association show splendid activity and progress.

CANCER WEEK.—Successful "cancer weeks" have been carried out during the past year in New York City, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Colorado. In each of these campaigns, large numbers of people were reached not only by lectures arranged for the profession and public, but also through the large amount of newspaper publicity carried on at the same time. Slides and moving pictures were shown and demonstration clinics were held. In Scranton and Sayre, Pa., a day was set apart for the consideration of the cancer problem, under the auspices of the Cancer Commission of the State Medical Society. Notices were sent out to all of the medical men in the surrounding district, announcing clinics to be held at local hospitals. These clinics were most successful and suggestive. In the evening, public meetings were arranged for the physicians in attendance and for nurses and social workers.

PITTSBURG, PA.—The nursing service of the Irene Kaufman Settlement, Pittsburg, Pa., was started April 1, 1902, and continued until December 31, 1920. There was only one patient on the visiting list when the work was started in 1902, and a total of 10 patients served the first month. During 1920, a total of 1,562 patients were visited 20,101 times. These contrast figures indicate the growth of the work.

July 1, 1919, saw the starting of the work of the Public Health Nursing Association, whose director stated: "The Irene Kaufmann Settlement paved the way, or blazed the trail, for the accomplishment of a city-wide organization of Public Health Nursing Service such as we have to-day."

The Settlement continued to control its work and met the finances for its nursing district until the close of the year, December 31, 1920. During the fall the Public Health Nursing Association had a financial campaign in which the Irene Kaufmann Settlement assisted, and having raised sufficient funds, the Association took over the nursing service January 1, 1921.